

Journey Idea to Ecuador

17 Days



Panama hat makers, Cuenca

Prepared for
Steppes Travel Clients



QUICK REFERENCE ITINERARY

Day 1	Fly UK/Quito
Day 2	Quito/Otavalo
Day 3	Otavalo
Day 4	Otavalo/Quito
Day 5	Quito/ Amazon Rainforest
Day 6 & 7	Amazon Rainforest
Days 8	Amazon Rainforest/Cuenca
Day 9	Cuenca
Day 10	Cuenca/Loja
Day 11	Loja
Day 12	Loja/Guayaquil
Day 13	Guayaquil/Salinas
Day 14	Salinas/Machalilla National Park
Days 15	Machalilla National Park
Day 16	Fly Manta/ Quito Fly Quito/ UK, flying overnight
Day 17	Arrive in the UK.

DETAILED TRIP ITINERARY

Day 1

UK/Quito



Depart the UK on a flight to Quito, a journey of approximately 17 hours.

You will be met upon arrival by the Steppes Travel representative at the airport and transferred to your hotel. All transfers are private (unless stated otherwise) and included in your trip, however it will not detail every transfer on this itinerary.

Quito, at an altitude of 2,850 metres, is the second highest capital in Latin America after La Paz. The city lies in a dramatic setting in a long narrow valley, with the slopes of Pichincha Volcano at 4,794 metres to one side and the gorge of Machangara on the other. The old city is a UNESCO World Heritage Trust site, with beautiful colonial buildings, ornate churches, plazas and cobble streets. The new city comprises broad avenues, colourful parks, private residences and villas. Quito is a vibrant city, offering a choice of activities and is a good blend of everything South American.

Overnight at your chosen hotel in Quito on a bed and breakfast basis.

Day 2

Quito/Otavalo



Today depart Quito for your private trip north to Otavalo, a journey of approximately 2 hours. Today visit Cotachi, this is home to Ecuadors finest leather craftsmen and the weaving village of Peguche and see how the beautiful fabric are made.

Otavalo is set in beautiful countryside, surrounded by Andean peaks, valleys and waterfalls. The Cayambe Volcano is along the main road to Otavalo. It is 5,790 metres and the highest point in the world which lies directly on the Equator. Otavalo is a small town home to the famous Otavalo Indians.

Overnight at your chosen hacienda in Otavalo on a bed and breakfast basis.

Day 3

Otavalo



Day to explore the area with your guide, either on foot, horseback or bike.

If you would prefer to take things at a more leisurely pace you can relax at the hacienda.

Overnight at your chosen hacienda in Otavalo on a bed and breakfast basis.

Day 4

Otavalo/Quito

Travel today to the fascinating Otavalo food and craft market, the 'Poncho Plaza' is the main place to head towards. Here you will find woollen goods such as ponchos, blankets, scarves, sweaters, tapestries and gloves. This is definitely not a market just for tourists as Ecuadorians come in their thousands to buy and sell livestock and vegetables in abundance.



Day 5

After the market visit you can go to Cuichocha Crater Lake for a lakeside walk with orchids and views of three volcanic peaks. Enjoy lunch at the hacienda or have a picnic by the lake before transferring back to Quito.

Overnight at your chosen hotel in Quito on a bed and breakfast basis.

Quito/Amazon Rainforest



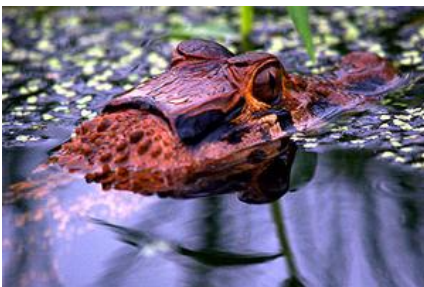
This morning your driver will collect you from the hotel in time to depart on your flight to Coca in the Northern Amazon Rainforest. The flights are private charters, and have their own terminal at Quito airport. The flight takes approximately 25-30 minutes over the Andean mountains and the rainforest.

On landing in Coca, you are transferred to the port, and the adventure begins! Begin with a motor canoe trip, a journey of approximately 2 hours. Upon arrival at your lodge you are treated to welcome cocktails and an introduction to the jungle, along with details of what the next few days has to offer, including animals to see in the local area. Wellington boots and waterproof ponchos are provided should you need them.

Overnight at your chosen rainforest lodge on a full board basis.

Day 6

Amazon Rainforest



Today you have the opportunity to see a vast variety of animals including monkeys, caiman, anteater, armadillo, sloth, giant otter, pink and grey dolphin, and birds such as toucans, parrots and macaws, as well as endless species of butterfly and insect.

Activities are spread out over a wide area and allow visitors to explore several distinct but equally fascinating habitats. Several trails lead through pristine *terra firme* forest, where 45m (150 ft) kapok trees tower and where roots form huge buttresses to give the trees support. Others follow strategically raised boardwalks in seasonally flooded forests, where walking on the ground would be nearly impossible during most of the year due to groundwater.



An outing may lead the possibilities of spotting animals, from the tiny pygmy marmoset to the feared ocelot or puma. For adventurous souls, the day does not necessarily end with dinner. Night walks and canoe trips, with the aid of flashlights, often reveal creatures seldom seen during daylight.

Overnight at your chosen rainforest lodge on a full board basis.

Day 7

Amazon Rainforest

Early start this morning to be paddled by dug-out canoe around the surrounding lagoon and through the flooded palm forest. Opportunity to fish for the notorious piranha, Caiman spotting at night or join a nocturnal walk through the virgin forest trails.

Overnight at your chosen rainforest lodge on a full board basis.

Day 8



Amazon Rainforest/Cuenca

Early departure to begin the journey back to Coca in a motorised canoe. Depart on a flight from Coca to Quito.

Upon arrival in Quito, transfer and depart on a flight to Cuenca, a journey of approximately 45 minutes.

Cuenca is the third largest city in Ecuador founded in 1557 on the Inca site of Tomebamba it is a designated UNESCO city. With cobblestone streets and many old buildings constructed in the marble quarried nearby, the city preserves a colonial air.

Overnight at your chosen hotel in Cuenca on a bed and breakfast basis.

Day 9



Cuenca

Day at leisure to enjoy this charming town.

Home to two Cathedrals and numerous churches, and a daily flower market; Cuenca is a super place to spend time pottering around. The Panama Hat factory is also here, in the Industrial part of the City. Panama hats are actually Ecuadorian, and were only given their name when they were sent up to Panama for the workers employed on the Canal.

Overnight at your chosen hotel in Cuenca on a bed and breakfast basis.

Day 10



Cuenca/Loja

Travel south today to the Province of Loja. It offers a unique combination of paramo, cloud forest, and rainforest. Loja's capital city of the same name and the area's natural wonders remain unsullied and largely undiscovered by travellers because they are tucked away in the southern most portion of the country.

Travellers willing to make the trip south can look forward to breathtaking vistas, indigenous markets, an amazing National Park, colonial architecture, and unparalleled hospitality.

Overnight at your chosen hotel in Loja on a bed and breakfast basis.

Day 11



Loja

Day at leisure to relax and explore Loja.

You could take a trip to visit the Vilcabamba Valley, a small town located in a subtropical valley, it is famed for the longevity of its locals, and many folks are allegedly over 100 years of age. It is also the most tranquil and relaxing town to visit in Ecuador, which features alternative health options. A further option would be to visit the Podocarpus National Park with over 500 bird species.

Overnight at your chosen hotel in Loja on a bed and breakfast basis.

Day 12



Loja/Guayaquil

Depart Loja on a flight to Guayaquil, a journey of 30 minutes.

Guayaquil is the largest city in Ecuador. Founded in 1535, Guayaquil has virtually no ancient monuments left, however this is the forward thinking and modern rival to Quito. It is a fast paced city, with a riverfront area on the west bank of the river Guayas.

Overnight at your chosen hotel in Guayaquil on a bed and breakfast basis.

Day 13



Guayaquil/Salinas

Depart Guayaquil heading towards Salinas on the West Coast. Stop off at a local hacienda with a coffee and cocoa plantation on the way and try some of the produce.

Then continue to the small colourful, authentic fishing village of Anconcito, before arriving in the Coastal town of Salinas. Salinas is situated at the end of Santa Elena Peninsula with 2 main sandy beaches and many restaurants to eat a variety of local seafood.

Overnight at your chosen hotel in Salinas on a bed and breakfast basis.

Days 14



Salinas/Machalilla National Park

Drive north along the beautiful, quiet coast passing long stretches of sandy beaches and going through sleepy fishing villages. These villages are very simple and specialise in wood work, Tagua (vegetable ivory) carving, ceramics or fishing. It is a fascinating area with friendly people and often overlooked by visitors.

The Machalilla National Park covers an area of 55,000 ha including Salango and La Plata Island. The bays, small islands, beautiful beaches and forests, are all protected and are a haven for wildlife. While in the park you can find tropical dry forest which is home to some fascinating pre Colombian archaeology. There are also areas of cloud forest, a great area for birdwatching.

Overnight at your chosen hotel in Machalilla on a bed and breakfast basis.

Day 15



Machalilla National Park

Visit La Plata island to see humpback whales (Jun-Sep), on the island some species you would find in the Galapagos Islands, such as Blue footed boobies, frigate birds, Albatross (Dec to Apr), sea lions and mockingbirds.

Overnight at your chosen hotel in Machalilla on a bed and breakfast basis.

Day 16

Manta/UK

Depart Manta on a flight to Quito.

Depart Quito on a flight to the UK, flying overnight.

Day 17

Arrive UK.

TRIP PRICE

In each location there is a variety of different category of hotels, lodges and guest houses, therefore as a guide we have broken these down into 3 categories; Traveller, Deluxe and Superior Deluxe. It is difficult to categorise each property as they vary so much therefore this is a general price guide only.

Traveller price from £4,445 per person + flight taxes
Deluxe price from £4,560 per person + flight taxes
Superior Deluxe price from £4,950 per person + flight taxes

The rates quoted are subject to the availability of all services, currency fluctuations, written confirmation and Steppes Travels terms and conditions.

The price includes return flight from UK, internal flights, local transport, airport-hotel transfers and tours on a private basis, accommodation (twin/double with private facilities) and board. Accommodation is on a bed and breakfast basis, unless staying in a remote lodge when normally this will be on a full board basis.

The price excludes entrance charges to sites, parks and museums, extra local excursions and guided tours, international and domestic airport taxes. Travel insurance, visas, single supplements (if applicable) and items of a personal nature, such as laundry, drinks, etc.

Please note that the above is only a suggested journey, allowing in-depth visits to the highlights of the country and the chance to explore the wide range of possibilities this fascinating country has to offer. We have a separate list of escorted tours and specialise in tailoring individual itineraries to your particular interests and requirements. This journey idea serves more as a general guide on what there is to see and do, as well as a guide on price.

Why Travel with Steppes?

Steppes Travel was founded in 1989 with the objective of creating a travel company where service and knowledge are of the highest priority. We aim to design itineraries and include the highlights of any country, whilst taking travellers off the beaten track to see lesser known, interesting places not frequented by large numbers of tourists. We offer individuals the ability to travel safely in remote areas, with the knowledge that we have travelled there before.

Financial Protection

Steppes Travel is a fully bonded tour operator that complies with the Civil Aviation Authority bonding conditions of the UK. This fully guarantees your money in the unlikely event of us going out of business before you start your holiday. Our ATOL number is 6945 and we have full insurance to cover the financial failure of an airline. In addition, all accommodation-only bookings (such as hotels, lodges and boats) which are not covered by the ATOL regulations are financially protected with all payments being held in a separate trust account until the date of departure. This is in accordance with the Package Travel Regulations Act 1992.

Specialist Knowledge

We demand and employ only a very high calibre of staff. All of our specialists have a wealth of travel experience and have travelled, and continue to travel, extensively throughout their regions of specialisation. You can therefore rely on their first hand knowledge and expertise. Some have been with us for more than ten years. They will tell you about those intimate, friendly hotels and introduce you to our charismatic guides - those little extra qualities that make your holiday both unique and special.

A Tailor-made Journey

After an initial discussion with you, one of our specialists will create a unique itinerary for your trip, designed around your own interests, preferred style of accommodation and the pace at which you like to travel. This will be fine tuned until you are completely satisfied with it. Throughout this whole

process, you will be dealt with by the same specialist and you are welcome to call them at any time.

24 hour Emergency Service

We have an emergency service so that we can be contacted 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Recognition

More than 65% of our business is achieved through recommendations, referrals and repeat bookings. This, for us, is the highest endorsement we could have. In addition, our 20 years of experience in this specialist travel sector confirms our expertise.

Please contact the Latin America team on 01285 885 333 or visit our website www.steppestravel.co.uk for further information.

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